

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5994

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, NI

SUBJ: PAN AM OPERATIONS IN NIGERIA

REF (A) LAGOS 5302, (B) LAGOS 6890, (C) LAGOS 5253, (D) STATE

163813

1. LOCAL PAN AM (PA) REP PETER LEGRO ADVISES EMBASSY THAT THERE IS POSSIBILITY THAT PAN AM CAN ENLIST NIGERIA AIRWAYS (WT) TO HELP OBTAIN FOURTH FREQUENCY TO NIGERIA FOR PA (REFS A AND B). WT PRESENTLY HAS BLOCKED SEAT ARRANGEMENT WITH PA (2 FIRST CLASS, 10 COACH SEATS ON ONE FLIGHT PER WEEK TO/FROM NEW YORK) WHICH HAS PROVED LUCRATIVE TO WT. PA PROVIDES AIRCRAFT, CREW, AND SALES PROMOTION AND CHARGES WT ONLY OPERATING COSTS FOR SEATS. PA HAS PROPOSED THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT BE MODIFIED TO ALLOW WT ONE FIRST CLASS AND 6 COACH SEATS ON EACH PA FLIGHT TO/FROM NEW YORK PER WEEK. NEW ARRANGEMENT WOULD ALLOW WT 3 FIRST CLASS AND 18 COACH SEATS PER WEEK NOW AND POTENTIAL 4 FIRST CLASS AND 24 COACH SEATS PER WEEK IF PA GRANTED FOURTH FREQUENCY. IN ADDITION, PA HAS OFFERED TO GIVE WT 2 PALLETS (OF 13 PALLET CAPACITY) ON ANY CARGO FREQUENCY PA MAY BE GRANTED. LEGRO BELIEVES PA PROPOSALS ATTRACTIVE TO WT, AND HE HAS SUGGESTED WT MAY WISH TO INDICATE TO MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (MCA) ITS LACK OF OPPOSITION TO PA REQUEST FOR FOURTH PASSENGER FREQUENCY AND ONE CARGO FREQUENCY. MCA HAS TO DATE NOT REPLIED OFFICIALLY TO PA LETTER REQUEST OF MAY (REF A).

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2. WHETHER OR NOT LATEST PA PLOY RESULTS IN GRANT OF FOURTH FREQUENCY NOW, LEGRO BELIEVES (AND EMBASSY CONCURS) NIGERIA REMAINS ULTIMATELY INTERESTED IN BILATERAL AIR AGREEMENT FOR BOTH REASONS OF PRESTIGE AND PRACTICALITY. WT NOW IN MARKET FOR WIDE-BODY LONGRANGE AIRCRAFT (REF C) AND ACCORDING TO SOME RUMORS IS FINALIZING DETAILS FOR PURCHASE OF TWO DC-10S AND ONE 747-SP. WITH SUCH NEW AIRCRAFT IN FLEET, WT COULD BE EXPECTED TO PRESS FOR FREQUENCIES TO NEW YORK (AND PA WOULD NOT OPPOSE THEM IN PRINCIPLE) WHICH FMG WOULD DOUBTLESS PREFER TO FORMALIZE IN FULL AIR AGREEMENT. EMBASSY HAS SUBMITTED NOTE IN ACCORDANCE WITH REF D INDICATING USG WILLINGNESS TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ON SUBJECT. RECENT BRITISH EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, IS THAT MCA BILATERAL AGREEMENT SPECIALISTS ARE STRETCHED THIN. TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL WHICH HAVE BEEN PROGRESSING INTERMITTENTLY FOR A YEAR, BRITISH HAD SCHEDULED TRIP TO LAGOS BY UK AIR SPECIALIST IN MAY, BUT MCA ASKED THAT THIS TRIP BE RESCHEDULED PLEADING NON-AVAILABILITY OF MCA NEGOTIATORS. NO NEW DATE FOR DISCUSSIONS HAS BEEN SET. EMBASSY BELIEVES FMG MAY TAKE TIME REPLYING TO OUR NOTE BUT THAT PUTTING OUR WILLINGNESS FOR DISCUSSIONS ON RECORD DEMONSTRATES OUR GOOD FAITH.

3. ACCORDING TO LEGRO PA STILL HAS NO FORMAL COMMITMENT FROM FMG ON WT MANAGEMENT CONTRACT, BUT PA CONTINUES TO PLAN ON ITS COMMENCEMENT.

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